



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Summary

Public Participation Program

Guidelines Team

The following Public Participation Program was developed under the guidance of a State Transportation Plan Guidelines Team (Team). The Team was charged with drafting an approach for developing the statewide plan and public involvement program. The Team was sponsored by the Deputy Director of Transportation Planning and Modal Programs and comprised of representatives from regional transportation agencies, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the California Transportation Commission, Federal Highway Administration, Local Government Commission, Surface Transportation Policy Project and selected programs within the Department of Transportation.

The draft Guidelines Elements and Public Participation Program were distributed to over 250 organizations and individuals for comment. Comments received were incorporated into the final draft in accordance with the Guideline Team's direction.

Public Participation Program

The Public Participation Program (PPP) is developed to support and inform the California Transportation Plan. The CTP is a strategic twenty-year, transportation plan that considers the mobility and access of people, goods and services throughout the State. On behalf of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, Caltrans will serve as the lead agency in developing the CTP. However, the CTP is intended to be the State's plan not a Caltrans' plan. The Plan is comprehensive, in that it considers transportation facilities at the local, regional, state and inter-state level. The Plan is multi-modal in that it considers all transportation modes, including roads and highways, rail, seaports, airports and transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It is an important decision tool that links state and regional transportation plans to provide strategic direction for sound transportation investments.

The PPP was developed to maximize limited resources and will be guided by a set of outreach principles. While the strategies may be adjusted to respond to input or to improve participation, the principles will remain sound. They are:

- Provide early and continuing public involvement,
- Communicate how public participation will influence plan development,
- Partner with regional transportation planning agencies,
- Utilize innovative communication tools and media,
- Develop a robust educational component,
- Provide timely information,
- Provide adequate public notice,
- Ensure reasonable public access,
- Go into the communities to facilitate participation,
- Make use of smaller information group meetings and discussions,
- Tailor public involvement to the issues,
- Ensure and demonstrate explicit consideration of comments,
- Provide periodic review and evaluation,
- Maintain a current outreach database, and

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- Seek out and consider the needs of the non-traditional stakeholder.

The PPP strategies were designed to meet specific objectives identified for four CTP development phases, 1) Visioning, 2) Scoping, 3) Issue Development and Technical Analysis, and 4) Marketing and Approval. During the first phase, a vision for California's future transportation system, with supporting goals and objectives, will be developed. This Phase will require considerable input from system users and providers and key policy makers. The Visioning Phase will also require collaboration with other state agencies, such as Housing, Employment, Resources, Energy and Environmental Protection, and our regional partners.

State planning is a cyclical process and no one state plan can address all of the state's transportation issues. During the Scoping Phase issues will be selected for inclusion in the CTP based on the comments received during the Visioning Phase. An expanded Policy Advisory Committee will guide the Scoping effort and will remain involved throughout the CTP's development.

The issues selected during the Scoping Phase will move forward to the Issue Development and Technical Analysis Phase. During this Phase, Technical Advisory Committees comprised of direct and indirect stakeholders and issue experts will oversee the technical analysis, alternative strategy evaluation and development of performance indicators.

In the Marketing and Approval Phase, the issues will be brought together in an understandable draft state transportation plan. The draft plan will be widely distributed and comments solicited through meetings, interviews, the CTP website and workshops.

During the entire development process, staff will document comments and provide feedback to participants. Feedback to those who have submitted comments and participated in meetings is a vital element of the PPP. It is critical that the participants understand how their comments are being considered and why decisions are made.

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Introduction

Public involvement has always been a part of a successful public agency's mission. This fact is borne out in a world where competing interests must come to consensus on how to address multiple social needs. As might be expected, solutions to difficult and important questions are rarely easy to achieve. The process of soliciting, listening, and responding to what citizens and customers have to say about a public agency's plans for action can be complicated, challenging, and often intimidating process. However, if done well, it can also be a rewarding and meaningful experience that leads to better decisions on issues of important public policy.

The following Public Participation Program (PPP) is designed to support and inform the development of the California Transportation Plan (CTP). The CTP is a comprehensive, multi-modal, strategic twenty-year transportation plan that considers the mobility of people, goods and services throughout the State. It is an important decision tool that links state and regional transportation plans to provide strategic direction for sound transportation investments. The purpose of the Plan is to define (state-owned) and guide (state-interest), transportation decisions based on an approved transportation vision. It also sets standards for measuring effectiveness and ensures accountability so that all transportation investments support this vision.

Requirements and Regulations

Federal laws and regulations have requirements pertaining to public outreach on transportation decision-making. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) (23 U.S.C., Sections 134 and 135; 49 U.S.C. app. 1607) and its 1998 successor, TEA-21, emphasize public participation in the transportation planning and programming process. The Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) for statewide transportation planning provides guidance for developing and adopting a public participation plan. While the rules have yet to be adopted, they do not differ greatly from regulations adopted for ISTEA and will serve as a guide for this Public Participation Program. The NPRM state:

- Public involvement shall:
 - Be early and continuous,
 - Provide for full public involvement and access to key decisions,
 - Provide a process for seeking out and considering the needs of traditionally underserved groups,
 - Provide a process for consulting with Indian Tribal Governments and Federal land managing agencies. The process will be developed in cooperation with these entities,
 - Provide coordination with adjacent states and countries,
 - Allow for participation of the air quality agencies,
 - Provide a documented process for consultation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas. The process will be developed in cooperation with non-metropolitan officials, and
 - Provide for periodic evaluation for effectiveness.
- The State's public participation procedures will be considered by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as they make their planning findings to assure that full and open access is provided to the decision making process.

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FHWA and FTA regulations (23 CFR 771) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended) (42 U.S.C. 4321, et. seq.) outline minimum requirements for providing opportunities for the public to be informed and involved in the project development process for proposed improvements supported, at least in part, with federal funds. These minimum standards include published legal notices and public hearings (as required) to obtain public input regarding environmental documents for transportation projects.

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.S.A. 12101, et. seq.) require involving the community, particularly those with disabilities, in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services.

A Presidential Executive Order on Environmental Justice (EO 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations), issued on February 11, 1994, also focuses federal agencies' attention on reaching out to certain segments of the community. The Executive Order requires each federal agency to achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States. Caltrans must comply with USDOT's Final Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. The Final Order states "procedures shall be established, or expanded, as necessary, to provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement by members of minority and low-income populations during the planning, and development of programs, policies, and activities."

Public Participation Program Principles

The California Transportation Plan's Public Participation Program will be governed by a set of principles. While the guidelines may be adjusted or revised to respond to external influences or needs, the principles will remain sound. They are:

- **Provide Early and Continuing Public Involvement** - opportunities for public involvement throughout the CTP development process. Methods of input will be varied and well publicized.
- **Communicate How Public Participation will Influence Plan Development** - develop informational materials (including this document) that describe the Public Participation Program and planning process. These materials will detail the opportunities for people to affect decisions and demonstrate the points in the process where input will affect the future of California's transportation system.
- **Partner with regional transportation planning agencies** – to ensure coordination and effective use of resources. The Public Participation Program will be carried out in full partnership with RTPAs and MPOs. It will be a mutual effort utilizing the strengths of both the state and regional organizations.
- **Utilize Innovative Communication Tools and Media** - to communicate to the public. These can range from telephone hotlines, teleconferencing, websites, printed material, interactive graphic presentations and providing e-mail addresses for public comment on proposed plans of action, as well as distributing multi-lingual publications.
- **Develop a Robust Educational Component** – provide system users with an explanation of the CTP, its purpose and relationship to overall transportation planning; the value of their input and how it will be used. The educational component will continue throughout the development of the CTP.

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- **Provide Timely Information** – notify stakeholders directly and indirectly affected by transportation issues, plans, processes and policies of opportunities to provide input. Distribute and electronically post documents and provide adequate time for review and comment.
- **Provide Adequate Public Notice** - of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points.
- **Ensure Reasonable Public Access** – to technical and policy information used in the development of the CTP, this includes using language and terminology easily understood by the general public. It also includes providing reasonable access in compliance with ADA requirements and multilingual announcements and information.
- **Go into the communities to facilitate participation** – sponsor local and regional forums to gain input. Hold meetings in times and locations accessible to the target audience. To gain meaningful public participation during all phases, staff will utilize regularly scheduled meetings to make presentations, discuss specific issues and document comments and concerns.
- **Make use of Smaller Information Group Meetings and Discussions** – will be initiated when possible and appropriate. People feel more comfortable asking questions and expressing their concerns in a smaller, informal meeting than a large public forum.
- **Tailor Public Involvement to the Issues** – target those directly and indirectly affected by specific issues.
- **Ensure and Demonstrate Explicit Consideration of Comments** – a method for demonstrating how comments and input are being considered and influence the CTP development process.
- **Provide Periodic Review** - of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all. Revise the process as needed.
- **Maintain a Current Outreach Database** – of individuals and organizations including civic and cultural groups, citizens advisory committees, business associations, tourist groups, transportation advocacy groups, tribal governments, organizations and associations with low-income, minority, elderly and disabled constituents. Database entries will be categorized by interest. This will enable staff to notify appropriate groups of specific issues and activities. Public outreach participants will be added to the database and will receive newsletters and updates on the CTP development process. The updates will include information on how the comments were considered and incorporated into the working documents and CTP.
- **Seek Out and Consider the Needs of the Non-Traditional Stakeholders** – with guidance by leaders of minority, low-income, seniors, etc. communities, our regional partners and the Caltrans' Title VI Office, utilize specially designed strategies to reach traditionally underserved communities.

Non-Traditional Stakeholder Approach

There are many challenges in garnering diverse input. Cultural and language barriers can foil the best of intentions. Situational barriers such as meeting times and locations and the need for childcare also pose a challenge. More difficult to overcome are differences in perception such as agency mistrust and a belief that all critical decisions have already been made. In a state as diverse as California - where our current and future population presents no clear demographic majority – it is essential that we overcome these obstacles and implement an effective outreach program.

The strategies to reach the traditionally underserved segments of our population will be developed with guidance from leaders of minority, low-income and senior communities. We will also work with the RTPAs and MPOs to identify outreach methods that have worked in the past and to learn from efforts that have not; and to build upon the agencies' ongoing outreach efforts.

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Additionally, staff will refer to USDOT's "Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making" published in September 1996. Some key steps to overcome barriers to participation are:

- *Cultural Barriers*
 - Identify and reach out to local community organizations and their leaders; and,
 - Research their culture, customs, language, and communication styles.
- *Language Barriers*
 - Identify bilingual speakers;
 - Distribute multi-lingual notices, fact sheets, educational material and newsletters; and,
 - Provide interpreters at public meetings and workshops.
- *Mobility and Other Disabilities*
 - Use accessible facilities for mobility impaired individuals,
 - Provide sign language interpreters for hearing impaired people at meetings,
 - Use telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) to communicate via telephone with hearing impaired people; and,
 - Provide materials in large print, audio, Braille, and computer diskette format for visually impaired people.
- *Economic/Income Barriers*
 - Schedule meetings or other face-to-face interactions at a time and place that accommodates participants' schedules so that schedule and travel constraints are minimized, and
 - Consider providing transit fare and child care.

Public Participation Program Guidelines

The Public Participation Program will be guided by a Public Participation Program Advisory Committee (PPPAC), the Transportation Planning Program, Office of State Planning, and implemented by district planning staff with Headquarters' assistance. The PPPAC will be comprised of representatives from the public and private sector with experience in outreach efforts and sensitive to the challenges of developing public policy. The committee will also include representatives from diverse backgrounds to work in collaboration with experts to guide the public participation process and ensure that the CTP receives comment from a diversity of groups.

The RTPAs and MPOs will be asked to be full partners in the outreach effort. When possible and appropriate, the PPP will utilize existing forums and outreach mechanisms developed by the districts and our regional partners to share information and gain input to the CTP development effort. The use of established, regularly scheduled meetings will help maximize the resources available for outreach efforts.

The PPP Guidelines are presented in four distinct but interrelated CTP development phases. The objective of each phase determines the outreach strategy and target audience. While the phases are presented in a sequential format, they may overlap when implemented. Flexibility is key to responding to and considering input, comments and concerns gathered. The Public Participation Program

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Guidelines do not presume the vision, goals or objectives that will evolve or the issues that will be addressed in the California Transportation Plan, therefore, specific groups are not identified.

Visioning Phase. The vision developed for California's future transportation system, and associated goals and objectives, will guide the development of the state transportation plan. The early visioning community involvement effort will seek to identify the values, needs and visions of California's diverse communities. Early input will also serve to identify the publics' and transportation providers' concerns regarding future mobility. These values and concerns will help to determine the CTP's scope and focus.

Gaining meaningful input and an understanding of the system users' concerns regarding future mobility requires substantial early outreach and a means of framing the issues that captures the users interest. To achieve this needed input the Public Participation Program will include:

- A transportation conference on June 21 - 22, 2001, to provide an opportunity to explore transportation issues and trends;
- A customer survey. The survey effort will include over 50-targeted focus groups including minority groups, low-income communities, seniors, persons with disabilities and Native Americans; and a random telephone survey;
- Key person interviews;
- Questionnaires distributed to local officials, regional partners, transit operators, business associations, emergency service providers, law enforcement and transportation advocacy groups;
- Seeking legislative input at various stages;
- Collaboration with key agency officials;
- A review and comment process, including with key stakeholders, other state agencies, with tribal governments and with adjacent states;
- Presentations and comment solicitation at schools, community and business organizations, established local, regional and state forums; and
- Document and categorize all input.

This phase will also provide an educational component to explain the CTP, its purpose and how the public can provide input to the process. Tools to engage people and inform the public include using graphic displays, such as computer simulations and visualization techniques, printed materials and a well designed interactive website. The educational component will continue throughout the Plan's development.

Scoping Phase. State transportation planning is an ongoing cyclical process. The CTP cannot address all mobility issues identified in the Visioning Phase. During the Scoping Phase the issues of greatest concern will be identified and selected for consideration in the CTP. During this Phase it is important to collaborate with decision-makers at the state and regional level.

During the Scoping Phase, staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the early outreach efforts and adjust the Public Participation Program as needed. Staff will also provide feedback to those who participated in the Visioning Phase. The feedback will assure the public that their concerns are being heard and the

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decision-making process is open, objective and considers all viewpoints. Additional efforts during the Scoping Phase will include:

- Establishing a core and expanded Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). The core Committee will meet to provide policy guidance and will be accessible to staff to help resolve policy issues. The expanded Committee will be kept informed on the Plan's development and will provide guidance on policy issues, but will meet less frequently.

Caltrans will seek to provide representatives of all interested stakeholder constituencies, including representatives from state and federal agencies, urban and rural regional transportation agencies and advocacy groups on the expanded Policy Advisory Committee. The Core PAC will also include representatives from diverse constituencies but will have fewer members to facilitate coordination with the CTP development team. Business, Transportation and Housing Agency will exercise final approval of PAC membership.

- The Policy Advisory Committee will interact with the Public Participation Advisory Committee to facilitate development of policy consistent with the public's input, to the extent possible.
- Identify specific groups and agencies that are directly or indirectly affected by the issues most frequently identified during the Visioning Phase. Solicit additional input from these groups to further define the issues.

Issue Development and Technical Analysis Phase. During the third phase, staff will focus on the issues selected during the Scoping Phase and will work closely with representatives of directly and indirectly effected groups. The Public Participation Program will focus on these select groups to gain comments and concerns and resolve potential conflicting viewpoints and objectives, to the extent possible.

The objective of the Issue Development and Technical Analysis Phase is to clearly define the problem, explore alternative strategies to resolve or mitigate the problem, select a preferred strategy, and identify performance indicators and methods for measuring progress. Specific outreach efforts during this phase include:

- Establish technical advisory committees comprised of representatives of directly and indirectly affected groups for each issue. The advisory committees should be comprised of private and public sector members from various geographic areas, as appropriate.
- Enlist experts in the various fields to serve as a peer review group.
- Outreach to adjacent states and countries as appropriate. Depending on the issue, this element may reach beyond our neighboring states to other states in specific transportation corridors. Outreach may also extend to states facing similar challenges.
- Establish liaison with the legislative transportation committees to keep them informed and obtain their input.
- Secure input from other public agencies that may have regulatory or policy interest in the issue.
- Widely circulate the issue papers for review and comment prior to incorporation in the draft California Transportation Plan.

Marketing and Approval Phase. During the final phase, the issues defined and developed in the previous phases will be incorporated into an accessible, coherent, interrelated draft California Transportation Plan. The draft CTP will include the vision, goals and objectives that guided the

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selection and development of the mobility issues addressed in the plan. The draft will also describe the public outreach effort and the how the public's comments and concerns influenced the development of the Plan. Availability of the draft CTP will be widely advertised. The draft CTP will be available from the website and hard copies will be transmitted upon request. The public will have varied means to submit their comments including electronically. Outreach efforts specific to the final phase include:

- Advertising, posting and distributing the draft CTP for review and comment.
- Notifying the public on how to submit comments on the draft CTP.
- Sponsoring workshops to discuss issues and address questions.
- Presenting the draft at regularly scheduled meetings to discuss issues and document comments and concerns.
- Holding formal hearings on the draft CTP.
- Depending on the comments and concerns and the degree of changes to the first draft, a second draft may be circulated prior the developing the final draft for submittal to the Governor.
- Submit the final draft California Transportation Plan to Governor for approval.
- Notify those involved in the outreach effort and issue letters of appreciation to those serving on policy and technical advisory committees and peer review committees.

Database

Staff will develop and maintain a stakeholder database throughout the development of the California Transportation Plan. The stakeholders included in the database will receive notifications, updates and media specific to their area of interest or general information regarding the CTP. Targeted groups will also receive invitations to participate in focus groups and workshops on specific issues and to gain the concerns of specific groups.

The database will include:

Contact Information:

Name
Title
Organization
Address
Phone
E-mail address

Groups:

African-American
Agencies - state, federal, regional
Asian/Pacific Islander
Business
Congestion Management Agency
Disabled Community
Elected Officials
Federal Land Management
Latino
Legislature
Media
Military branches
Native American
Seniors
Traffic Management Agencies
Youth/Students

Interest:

Bicycle
Commerce
Construction
Environmental
Goods Movement
Land-Use Advocates
Paratransit
Pedestrian
Sustainable Communities
Technology
Tourism
Transit